

# The Federal Diary

## CSC Studies Rise In Some Agencies' Starting Salaries

By Jerry Kluttz

New studies now under way could bring about higher starting salaries for several types of hard-to-fill Federal jobs.



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The Civil Service Commission can raise starting salaries when agencies prove to it that they are unable to hire necessary personnel at present pay rates. Employees on the job

are automatically raised to the higher salary levels.

At agency requests, CSC is reviewing the pay rates of shortsupply scientists and engineers on a nationwide basis. Many of these professionals already are paid rates higher than the minimum starting salaries of their respective grades. Even so, agencies contend that their rates are far behind salaries for similar jobs in industry.

A new increase for many scientists and engineers is a clear possibility.

CSC also is considering proposals that the salaries of staff nurses in Federal hospitals in the Boston, Seattle and San Francisco areas be raised immediately to meet higher outside salaries and competition. Higher pay for Federal nurses, when it comes, could be extended to other areas. Strikes by nurses have had the effect of boosting their salaries in non-Federal hospitals.

Defense is debating whether to ask CSC to boost starting pay for certain types of computer employes in areas such as Norfolk, Va., where there are acute shortages of qualified personnel.

Rep. James H. Morrison (D-La.) who was defeated for reelection is almost sure to be offered a Federal post, and it could be in Post Office.

Reminder: Federal employes have through Wednesday, Nov. 30, either to elect to participate in or to change their health insurance coverage. The so-called "open season" ends at that time, and it could be two years before there will be another.

Preliminary reports indicate relatively few employes will switch from one plan to another. The Government-wide indemnity plan underwritten by Aetna Life Insurance is expected to grow because it's one of the few major plans that won't raise its rates as of Jan. 1.

AFL-CIO's Machinists won by a 294 to 219 vote the right to represent 700 wage board employes at the Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio. It beat out AFL-CIO's American Federation of Government Employees.

In another election, AFGE was chosen to represent units of both nonprofessional and professional employes in the Los Angeles office of the Internal Revenue Service. The National Association of Internal Revenue Employees will represent the nonprofessional supervisors.

Battle: Federal agencies are madly scrambling for 177 new Grade 16, 17 and 18 jobs that pay from \$20,075 to \$25,890.

CSC will allocate them, and it already has made preliminary decision on some of them. It was directed by Congress to distribute them mainly to new and expanded agencies.

CSC has decided to give them to agencies such as HEW, HUD and others that are most involved in carrying out the President's Great Society programs. This has caused officials to ask if the Vietnam war and vital domestic programs aren't as important as those launched by the Great Society.

The Poverty Agency won't get any of the new jobs because Congress strictly limited the number it could have. Tentatively, the new Department of Transportation must await congressional action next year to get additional super-grade positions.

Officials in other agencies are concerned over the prospect that they will be forced to turn over some of their Grade 16, 17 and 18 jobs to the Great Society agencies.

As these jobs are vacated, they can't be filled automatically by their agencies. Instead, they must be turned back to CSC which will consider them against other agency requests.

The shortage of the top-paid jobs makes it almost certain that the Johnson Administration will again ask Congress next year to increase their number by several hundred.